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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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DAILY BRIEF

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

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Yugoslavia's carefully balanced position between East and West in its foreign relations may be jeopardized by the French interception off Oran of a Yugoslav freighter carrying 150 tons of arms which the French fear are destined for North African rebels. While France has not reacted strongly to previous shipments, in the light of present French sensitivity over North Africa this incident will tend to confirm recent French suspicions that Tito is swinging too far away from the West. [redacted]

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Marshal Zhukov has not been publicly identified since his removal from high party and government posts in late October. Soviet officials have stated that he would receive a new military appointment upon completion of 90 days' leave of absence which is probably about to expire. [redacted]

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

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no
Egyptian President Nasir appears basically wary of proposals for Syrian-Egyptian union, and seems to be setting difficult conditions in order to dampen Syrian enthusiasm for the project. Pressures for union continue to mount, however, and there almost certainly will be additional public announcements that plans for union are being developed.

25X1

(Page 1)

III. THE WEST

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West German-Soviet trade and repatriation talks will be resumed on 30 January, and are expected to last for two or three months. Bonn now has reason to believe that the USSR will shortly release some 75 German missile experts held in Sukhumi. These Germans probably have not had access to current Soviet missile development.

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French military reaction in Algiers to the recent Tunisian border incidents is such that civilian officials fear that even a minor incident could start the French Army across

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the frontier "with or without orders from Paris." Premier Gaillard faces a foreign policy debate in the National Assembly beginning 21 January. He is under heavy pressure from rightist deputies to break relations with Tunisia, although the Foreign Ministry is playing down this possibility. Tunisian President Bourguiba's 18 January speech to the constituent assembly was restrained in tone. [redacted]

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The circulation of antigovernment manifestos signed by prominent Venezuelans and a rumored oil workers' strike suggest mounting pressure on President Perez, with civilian groups probably attempting to coordinate their efforts with dissident military groups. Perez, in another effort to bolster his authority, has dismissed the new chief of the national security police and has apparently considered recalling the previous chief, Pedro Estrada, to Caracas. [redacted]

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~~X~~ Firm indications of the outcome of the Guatemalan elections will probably not be available before the afternoon of 20 January. Meanwhile, there have been no reports of violence. [redacted]

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I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

No back-up material.

II. ASIA-AFRICA

Syrian-Egyptian Union

There are conflicting reports of Nasir's immediate reaction to proposals for Syrian-Egyptian union. [redacted]

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[redacted] Nasir allegedly denounced the political activity of the Syrian Army, Syrian Chief of Staff Bizri's "flirtation" with the Communists, and Syria's continuing open hostility toward the United States.

In apparent contradiction, the Egyptian chargé in Damascus said Nasir has agreed to union provided that the Syrian Army abstains from politics and Syria's political parties dissolve. The chargé said "all Syrians who matter" had accepted these terms.

Both reports indicate, however, that Nasir is basically wary, particularly of army factionalism and Communist influence in Syria. He is using his strong bargaining position both to check the Syrian haste for union and to bid for more control over the Syrian situation. Even if Syrian leaders should give lip service to his terms, they probably would not be able or willing to carry them out. The pressures Syrian politicians have generated nevertheless seem strong enough to bring about further public announcements that plans for union are being developed. [redacted]

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